

**SUMMARY OF THE
TRANSITION COMMITTEE MEETING
APRIL 20, 2000**

The Transition Committee of the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Conference (NELAC) met by teleconference on Thursday, April 20, 2000 at 4 p.m. Eastern Standard Time (EST). The meeting was led by the committee's co-chairs, Ms. Carol Batterton of the Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission (TNRCC) and Dr. Charles Brokopp of the Utah Department of Health. A list of action items is given in Attachment A. A list of participants is given in Attachment B. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the issues contained on the committee's agenda.

AGENDA ITEMS

Minutes and action items from the March 2, 2000 and March 29, 2000 meetings were approved.

Council of State Governments. Dr. Brokopp was not able to arrange to have Mr. Robert Silvanik from the Council of State Governments. This item was deferred until a later conference call. Additional information on CSG can be found at the following address:

<http://www.statesnews.org/aboutcsg/aboutcsg.html>

NELAC Funding FY '99, '00, '01 and Beyond. Ms. Batterton described the federal budget information that she received from Ms. Hankins. The total estimated budget for FY 99, FY 2000, and FY 2001 was \$555K, \$471K and \$450K respectively. The budget categories included ELAB, NELAC meetings, committee meetings, website, implementation, and the national database.

Proficiency Testing. Dr. Wilson Hershey brought to the committee's attention a problem with the way PT is being implemented by the Accrediting Authorities. The fundamental question is which PT is going to be counted for NELAP purposes. Since laboratories often analyze PT samples for purposes other than accreditation, should the non-NELAP samples be used for accreditation? Should results from all PT challenges be reported and entered into the NELAP database? If laboratories were to declare up front which PT samples are to be used for meeting the NELAP standards, the PT providers could then send results from just those samples to the accrediting authorities. Section 2.7.3 says that all PT data must go into the database, however this would become very difficult to manage. An interim policy may be needed to address this issue since a change to this section will take much more time. Mr. Parr indicated that he is getting about one call a day now from labs that are having difficulty implementing NELAP. When a lab purchases PT samples from a provider, the lab needs to inform the provider which accrediting authority needs to receive the results. Labs can, however, order known or unknown PT samples for internal purposes. Dr. Hershey will provide some wording next week on how to resolve this issue. The statement or recommendation will be forwarded to the Chair of the PT Committee and to the Board.

State and Private Contribution to Development and Implementation of NELAP. An estimate of the costs incurred by state and private agencies during the development and

implementation of NELAP was prepared and presented by Mr. Parr. Some of the assumption made in developing the estimate included:

- a. 10 NELAC meetings with 300 individuals at 25 hours per meeting = 75,000 hours
- b. 200+ committee meetings with 10 individuals at 2 hours = 4,000 hours
- c. 20 state outreach meeting at 8 hours with 50 attendees = 8,000 hours
- d. Assessor training. 60 individuals at 40 hours each = 2,400 hours
- e. Average hourly rate of \$50.00 per hour
- f. Direct cost for meetings / travel $300 \times 10 \text{ meetings} \times \$500/\text{meeting} = \$1.5\text{M}$

The total estimated contribution over the past 5 years is \$6M or \$1.2M per year. It was noted that some of the cost estimates are very conservative and that the costs do not include the actual costs incurred by states that became accrediting authorities, or by laboratories that have made changes to meet the NELAC standards. The estimate also does not include the costs incurred by federal agencies such as DOD, DOE, DOI or EPA. When estimates of these other costs are included the total investment in NELAC over the past eight years could be as high as \$10M.

Options for On-going Support for NELAC. A list of three options for the on-going support of NELAC was prepared by Ms. Batterton and shared with the committee. Each option was discussed, and it was agreed that the committee would further develop the options and forward the proposals to the Board. It is anticipated that the options would be reviewed by the Board and then informally discussed with representatives from EPA before developing the details necessary to implement any option. One option involves the establishment of a private non-profit organization that would be able to perform many of the functions that are currently handled by EPA. EPA would need to continue to be actively involved in this option. Another option would be to have EPA maintain their current role and funding, whereas a third option would be to form a private, non-profit organization that would assume all duties currently provided by EPA. The committee sees a real need to have EPA, including the EPA regions stay involved with NELAC and continue funding at least the current level. A private, non-profit organization would have the ability to collect and use fees, as well as implement all aspects of the program. The committee discussed the advantages and disadvantages of each of the three options.

Ms. Batterton will make the suggested changes to the options document and distribute the updated document to the committee before April 25. It was noted that the Board would be meeting on April 25 at 10:30 am EDT.

Agenda for Transition Committee Meeting at NELAC 6 June 28, 2000 9-12:30pm

The following are topics that will be considered for the Transition Committee meeting in Williamsburg on June 28.

1. Update EPA Support for NELAC
2. Committee Membership
3. Fields of Testing - Mr. Parr
4. Report from Accrediting Authority Workgroup
5. PT recommendations to Board and Accrediting Authorities

Date and Time for Next Transition Committee conference call
May 18, 2000 4pm

Action Items
Transition Committee Meeting
April 20, 2000

Item No.	Action	Date to be Completed
1.	Dr. Brokopp will send final notes from March 2 and March 29 meetings to Exec Director.	Dr. Brokopp
2.	Dr. Hershey will draft a statement to clarify the PT issues. Statement will be forwarded to PT Committee and BOD	Dr. Hershey
3.	Update list of options and distribute to committee	Ms. Batterton
4.	Drs. Jackson and Brokopp will report to the committee on the BOD conference call to be held on April 25.	Dr. Jackson Dr. Brokopp

Participants
Transition Committee Meeting
April 20, 2000

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